

# **Eating Fish Can Improve Memory and Prevent Stroke**

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Older adults may be able to preserve and improve their memories and ward off stroke by eating more non-fried fish, researchers reported in the latest issue of *Neurology*.

They have found that older adults whose diets include three or more weekly helpings of baked or broiled tuna and other fish, like cod, high in omega-3 fatty acids are less likely to develop “silent” brain lesions that can lead to cognitive decline and vascular stroke.

A brain lesion, or infarct, is an area of damaged brain tissue. The damage typically results from a lack of blood flow to the area. The lesion is dubbed “silent” if it developed in someone who has not had a recognized stroke or transient ischemic attack, also called a mini stroke. Silent brain lesions are very common, especially as a person grows older. The lesions can cause thinking problems, memory loss and stroke.

“Previous findings have shown that fish and fish oil can help prevent stroke, but this is one of the only studies that looks at the effect of fish on silent brain infarcts in healthy, older people,” said Dr Jyrki Virtanen of the University of Kuopio in Finland.

He and his colleagues studied magnetic resonance imaging brain scans of 3,600 adults aged 65 and older who had no history of cerebrovascular disease. Five years later, researchers rescanned 2,313 of the participants and asked them questions about their diets, including how much fish they ate.

After comparing scans and analyzing diet information, they learnt that the adults who ate non-fried tuna and other fish high in omega-3 fatty acids at least three times a week had a nearly 26 per cent lower risk of silent brain lesions than those who opted for such foods less often.

Those who had just one serving of fish per week reduced their risk of silent brain lesions by 13 per cent and those who regularly chose the healthy fish also had fewer changes to the white matter in their brains.

“While eating tuna and other types of fish seems to help protect against memory loss and stroke, these results were not found in people who regularly ate fried fish,” Dr Virtanen said. “More research is needed as to why these types of fish may have protective effects, but the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA would seem to have a major role.”

Tuna, salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, and anchovies are all rich in omega-3 fatty acids and are good for the heart and the brain. Together with a healthy lifestyle, active mental stimulation, you can improve your brain function, stave off brain aging and improve your memory.

About the Author:

Martin Mak has developed a new program to help people enhance their memory and learning experience. Find out how with his free and popular ecourse at <http://www.mightymemory.com>

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